

CAFTA: A RAW DEAL FOR AMERICA

(Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because CAFTA is a raw deal for America, and opposition to this agreement is so strong that the pushers of CAFTA are resorting to lies, deceptions, and backdoor deals.

We all know that CAFTA means exporting American jobs because of access to cheap labor markets with almost nonexistent environmental and labor standards.

All week long we have heard from the supporters of this badly negotiated trade agreement that they have the votes they need to pass it. But I do not want anybody to be fooled and buy this lie. The truth is that the overwhelming majority of House Members have already indicated that they oppose this bill because it is a bad deal for American workers.

They will not even tell us when CAFTA will come to the floor for a vote. Instead, we come to see CAFTA come deceptively to the floor in the middle of the night when they think the American public is not watching.

I urge my colleagues to vote their conscience, to not accept backdoor deals, to stand their ground. Vote for what they already know is best for the people of their district. Vote to send CAFTA back to the drawing board.

SALUTING NASA ON A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF SPACE SHUTTLE "DISCOVERY"

(Mr. WELDON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the men and women of NASA and the contractor community for a successful launch of the Space Shuttle *Discovery* following a 2½ year hiatus in the operations of our space shuttle program.

Yesterday morning I had the pleasure of witnessing the launch at the Banana Creek viewing site along with First Lady Laura Bush, and it was truly a beautiful sight to see our space shuttle flying again.

As shuttle commander Eileen Collins and the crew of *Discovery* work to complete their mission, we here in the House of Representatives, and I am sure every American can join me in this, wish them Godspeed and a safe return to planet Earth.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG REIMPORTATION

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, the stars have aligned. Senator FRIST has

agreed to a vote on drug reimportation. That is how we recognize health care reform and Health Care Week and make a dent in skyrocketing health care costs. Now we are getting somewhere.

I should not have to remind Members of this body that in the last Congress here in the House we passed reimportation with a bipartisan majority. It is time now for an up-or-down vote in this House. In the very week we are debating health care reform, only 1 week, I might add, what is conspicuously absent? The one item which actually would help control costs of drugs and pharmaceutical products, the reimportation, providing Americans with a 50 percent reduction in the price of their prescription drugs.

Springfield, Massachusetts saved \$6 million in the first year they began importing prescription drugs. But we cannot have any of that here in the people's House. No. We get to vote on protecting drug companies like Merck, who make Vioxx, from any public redress for misleading the public. George Orwell would appreciate that.

Americans can no longer afford double-digit increases in prescription drugs. Mr. Speaker, it is time we give them a break and a vote on reimportation of pharmaceutical products. That is the right way to make progress on controlling health care costs.

IN SUPPORT OF THE ENERGY CONFERENCE REPORT

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to report that sometime this morning we are going to file the energy conference report. This is a piece of legislation that both parties can take pride in. A majority of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce Democrats have signed the conference report, including the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), distinguished ranking minority member. All of the Republicans have signed it in the Senate. Thirteen of the 14 Senate conferees have signed it.

This bill is going to transform our Nation's energy economy. It is going to breathe new life into clean coal technology, nuclear technology, renewable technology, and the ethanol industry. It is going to create tens of thousands of jobs for the American economy. It is going to lessen dependence on foreign sources of energy.

Regardless of what part of the country or what part of the economy each American is in, this energy bill will be a good deal for all Americans; and I would urge a "yes" vote when it comes to the floor sometime tomorrow afternoon.

IN OPPOSITION TO CAFTA

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I take my 1 minute today to discuss CAFTA because there will be little meaningful debate on the most important trade bill of this Congress. CAFTA is important less because of what is in it than what is not and because what it has come to represent.

I come from a trade-oriented community, and I believe in honest trade. I personally asked President Bush to insist upon bipartisan trade legislation that would command at least 250 votes in this Chamber. This is possible if we are fair to workers at home and abroad and more sensitive to the environment.

Instead, CAFTA has been crafted to be the lowest common denominator calculated to pass. By pandering to special interests, it reminds one of the old television show "Let's Make a Deal."

This is a lost opportunity. I will no longer support suboptimal trade agreements and await the day when we put principle and people before raw political calculation, pretending that it is trade policy.

A THREAT TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

(Mr. PRICE of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, 20 States including my home State of Georgia are experiencing a medical liability crisis. Hospitals are shutting their doors, doctors are leaving the profession, and patients are the ones left out in the cold.

OB-GYN doctors and some surgeons are paying hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in insurance premiums. One-third of the OB doctors in my State no longer deliver babies because delivering a baby is defined as a "high-risk procedure." Other specialists no longer cover emergency procedures.

One tragic story I am reminded of is a man who came to the emergency room after a fall with a subdural hematoma, or "bleeding on the brain." What is required to treat this is a relatively simple procedure performed by a neurosurgeon to relieve pressure on the brain. Instead of being saved, he died; and he died because there were no neurosurgeons at the hospital due to frivolous lawsuits and skyrocketing insurance rates.

Mr. Speaker, court rooms are interfering with our operating rooms and are threatening health care quality and raising the cost of health care for all Americans.

The HEALTH Act puts patients first and will protect our health care system for us and for our children and for our grandchildren. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5. Vote for the HEALTH Act.